



Utah Dept's of Health,
Agriculture, Wildlife, 12
local health departments and
Utah's Mosquito Abatement
Districts

Health Advisory

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Utah Has First Human West Nile Virus Case

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah public health officials report that a Utah resident has contracted West Nile virus. The person was exposed to West Nile virus in Uintah County. The patient is alive and is recovering from the infection.

In 2003, West Nile virus has been detected in eight Utah counties including Carbon, Duchesne, Emery, Grand, Sanpete, Uintah, Utah, and Wayne. Prior to this human case, public health officials identified West Nile virus in mosquitoes and horses in Uintah County this summer. Twelve of the 21 Utah horses infected with West Nile virus are from Uintah County. West Nile is transmitted to both humans and horses by mosquitoes.

“As we have been telling the public this last year, it was not a matter of if, but when West Nile Virus arrived in our community. Having known this we have been aggressive in our educational, environmental and disease surveillance efforts,” Joseph Shaffer, Health Officer, TriCounty Health Department.

Most people who are infected with West Nile virus do not show any symptoms. Some (about 1 in 5) have flu-like symptoms with fever, muscle aches, and possibly a rash. Fewer still (about 1 in 150) develop more severe illness affecting the brain and spinal cord. They may have symptoms such as headache, paralysis, and stiff neck. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious illness. As of today, 4,325 people in the United States have been infected with West Nile virus this year, and 81 have died. Colorado has had the highest number of individuals infected this year, along with the most deaths from the disease.

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The Utah Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Food, along with local health departments, local mosquito abatement districts, and the Division of Wildlife Resources are all collaborating in the tracking and monitoring of West Nile virus in Utah. In affected areas, local mosquito abatement district workers are increasing their efforts to reduce the number of mosquitoes that can spread the disease.

There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus infection, but there are ways Utahns can protect themselves. Most important is to avoid mosquito bites, especially from dusk to dawn. Here is a list of ways to prevent West Nile virus:

1. Protect from dusk to dawn. That is when mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active, so take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.
2. Use repellent with DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), following the label instructions carefully. For adults, use repellents containing DEET at 30-35% concentration. For children 2 months –12 years, use repellents containing 10% or less DEET. Do not use DEET on children under the age of 2 months and do not apply to hands and feet of infants.
3. Take cover. Wear light-colored, long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies any time.
4. Install or repair screen doors and window screens. Small holes are large enough to allow mosquitoes to enter.
5. Get rid of standing water sources around housing areas, such as water in old tires, cans, poorly kept swimming pools, toys, wheelbarrows, etc.
6. Change water that is kept outside for a reason, such as pet water dishes, birdbaths, etc., every 2-3 days.
- . 7. Clean rain gutters at least once a year.
- . 8. Aerate ornamental ponds or contact your local mosquito abatement district about pond treatment.
- . 9. Maintain swimming pools properly or drain them.

For up to date information on the spread of West Nile virus in Utah, please visit

www.health.utah.gov/wnv.